GENUINE---

Published in 1802?

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/b22022338

Mais. Sculp.

Upon this the same peasant was so bold as to draw a sword, but he had scarce got it out when he perceived another invisible hand had hold of it.

London, Pub. as the Act directs, by T. Roach, Russel Court, Drury Lane, Aug.st 30. 1802.

A New Edition, Improved.

THE GENUINE HISTORY OF THE GOOD DEVIL Of Woodstock.

THE STORY OF JANE GILBERT, *A Supposed Witch.*

THE FEUDS OF THE HOUSES OF KINTAIR and SEATON.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY AND FOR J. ROACH, AT THE
Britannia Printing-Office
RUSSEL-COURT, DRURY-LANE.

Price Sixpence.

30481

WELLCOME
HISTORICAL
MEDICAL
LIBRARY

THE

GENUINE HISTORY

OF THE

Good Devil of Woodſtock.

Being a particular account of the ſtrange and ſurpriſing APPARITIONS, *and works of* SPIRITS *which happened in the Months of October and November, in the year of our Lord Chriſt,* 1649. *When the Honourable Commiſſioners for ſurveying the ſaid Manor, ſat and remained there. Collected and atteſted by themſelves.*

IN times when a general knowledge of the Sciences pervade mankind, we hope it may not be conſidered improper to ſhew the weakneſs of our anceſtors, in allowing their underſtandings to ſo readily give way to a belief in ſupernatural cauſes. However our public amuſements tend to expoſe the arts by which the learned few impoſed upon

their contemporaries: the Phantaſmagoria having a wonderful effect on the powers of the mind, and convinces me that all ſupernatural appearances have been produced by men miſuſing ſcience, to delude and terrify the multitude, by an unmanly and unjuſt deprivation of their natural reaſon, in order to attain their own purpoſes. The following ſtory will elucidate this remark, and give ſtrength to the juſtice of it: when we conſider, that ſo lately as 1649. ſix gentlemen appointed as Commiſſioners from Oliver Cromwell, to ſurvey the manor of Woodſtock, were ſo groſsly impoſed upon by the practice of a little natural philoſophy, and chemiſtry, as to believe themſelves ſurrounded by evil ſpirits; and under the influence of this deception left the place, convinced that nothing but ſupernatural powers could have produced ſuch cauſes.

The Honourable the Commiſſioners arrived at Woodſtock manor houſe October the 13. and took up their reſidence in the kings own rooms. His Majeſty's bed-chamber they made their kitchen, the council-hall their pantry, and the preſence-chamber was the place where they ſat for the diſpatch of buſineſs: His Majeſty's dining room they made their wood yard, and ſtow'd it with no other wood but that of the famous royal oak, from the high park: which, that nothing might be left with the

the name of the king about it, they had dug up by the roots, and ſplit and bundled up into faggots for their firing.

October, 16. This day they firſt ſat for the diſpatch of buſineſs. In the midſt of their firſt debate, there entered a large black dog (as they thought) which made a terrible howling, overturned two or three of their chairs, and doing ſome other damage, went under the bed, and there gnawed the cords: the door this while continued conſtantly ſhut, when after ſome two or three hours, Giles Sharp their ſecretary, looking under the bed, perceived that the creature was vaniſhed, and that a plate of meat which one of the ſervants had hid there was untouched, and ſhewing this to their honours, they were all convinced there could be no real dog concerned in the caſe, the ſaid Giles alſo depoſed on oath, that to his certain knowledge there was not.

October, 17. As they were this day ſitting at dinner in a lower room, they heard plainly the noiſe of perſons walking over their heads, though they well knew the doors were all locked, and there could be none there; preſently after they heard alſo all the wood of the kings oak brought by parcels from the dining room, and thrown with great violence into the preſence chamber; as alſo, the chairs, ſtools, tables, and other furniture forcibly

hurled about the room: their own papers of the minutes of their tranſactions torn, and the ink-glaſs broken. When all this had ſometime ceaſed, the ſaid Giles propoſed firſt to enter into theſe rooms, and in preſence of the Commiſſioners, of whom he received the key, he opened the doors, and entering, with their honours following him, he there found the wood ſtrewed about the room, the chairs toſſed about and broken, the papers torn, and the ink-glaſs broken over them, all as they had heard; yet no footſteps appeared of any perſon whatever being there, nor had the doors ever been opened to admit or let out any perſons ſince their honours were laſt there. It was therefore voted Nem Con that the perſon who did this miſchief could have entered no other way than at the key-hole of the ſaid doors.

In the night following this ſame day, the ſaid Giles and two others of the Commiſſioners ſervants as they were in bed in the ſame room with their honours, had their beds feet lifted up ſo much higher than their heads, that they expected to have their necks broken; and then they were let fall at once with ſuch violence as ſhook them up from the bed at a good diſtance, and this was repeated many times, their honours being amazed ſpectators of it. In the morning the bedſteads were found

crack'd

crack'd and broken: and the ſaid Giles and his fellows declared they were ſore to the bones with the toſſing and jolting of their beds.

October, 19. As they were all in bed together, the candles were blown out with a ſulphurous ſmell, and inſtantly many trenchers of wood were hurled about the room; and one of them putting his head above the cloaths, had not leſs than ſix forcibly thrown at him, which wounded him very greviouſly. In the morning the trenchers were all found lying about the room, and were obſerved to be the ſame they had eaten on the day before, none being found remaining in the pantry,

October, 20. This night the candles were put out as before, the curtains of the bed in which their honours lay, were drawn to and fro many times with great violence; their honours received many cruel blows, and were much bruiſed beſide with eight great pewter diſhes, and three dozen wooden trenchers which were thrown on the bed, and heard afterwards rolling about the room.

Many times alſo this night, they heard the forcible falling of many faggots by their bed-ſide, but in the morning no faggots were found there; no diſhes nor trenchers were there ſeen neither; and the aforeſaid Giles atteſts, that by their different arranging

arranging in the pantry, they had aſſuredly been taken thence, and after put there again.

October, 21. The keeper of their ordinary and his bitch lay with them this night, they had no diſturbance.

October, 22. Candles put out as before. They had the ſaid bitch with them again, but were not by that protected: the bitch made a very pitious cry, the cloaths of their bed were all pull'd off, and the bricks without any wind, were thrown off the chimney-tops into the middle of the room.

October, 24. The candles put out as before. The curtains of the bed in the drawing room were forcibly drawn many times, the wood thrown about as before, a terrible crack like thunder was heard; and one of the ſervants running to ſee if his maſter was not killed, found at his return three dozen of trenchers laid ſmoothly upon his bed under the quilt.

October, 26. The beds were ſhaken as before, the windows ſeemed all broken to pieces and the glaſs fell in vaſt quantities all about the room. In the morning they found the windows all whole, but the floor ſtrewed with broken glaſs; which they gathered and laid by.

October,

October, 29. At midnight candles went out as before, ſomething walked majeſtically through the room and opened and ſhut the window, great ſtones were thrown violently into the room, ſome whereoff fell on the beds, others on the floor; and at about a quarter after one, a noiſe was heard as of forty cannon diſcharged together, and again repeated at about eight minutes diſtance. This alarmed and raiſed all the neighbourhood, who coming into their honours room, gathered up the great ſtones, fourſcore in number, many of them like common pebbles and boullers, and laid them by where they are to be ſeen to this day, at a corner of the adjoining field. This noiſe like the diſcharge of cannon was heard thro' all the country for ſixteen miles round. During theſe noiſes which were heard in both rooms together, both the Commiſſioners and their ſervants gave one another over for loſt, and cryed out help; and Giles Sharp ſnatching up a ſword, had nigh killed one of their honours, taking him for the ſpirit, as he came in his ſhirt into the room. While they were together the noiſe was continued, and part of the tiling of the houſe, and all the windows of an upper room were taken away with it.

October, 30. At midnight ſomething walked into the chamber treading like a bear, it walked many

many times about, then threw the warming-pan violently on the floor, and ſo bruiſed it that it was ſpoiled; vaſt quantities of glaſs were now thrown about the room, and vaſt quantities of horſes bones and great ſtones thrown in; theſe were all found in the morning, and the floor, beds, and walls were all much damaged by the violence they were thrown.

November, 1. Candles were placed in all parts of the room, and a great fire made. At midnight the candles all yet burning, a noiſe like the burſt of a cannon was heard in the room, and the burning billets were toſſed all over the room and about the beds, that had not their honours called in Giles and his fellows, the houſe had been aſſuredly burnt, an hour after the candles went out as uſual the crack of many cannon were heard, and many pails full of green ſtinking water were thrown on their honours in bed, graat ſtones were alſo thrown in as before, the bed-curtains and bedſteads torn and broken. The windows were now all really broken and the whole neighbourhood alarmed with the noiſes, nay, the very rabbit ſtealers that were abroad that night in the warren, were ſo frightened at the diſmal thundering, that they fled for fear and left their ferrets behind them.

One

One of their honours this night ſpoke, and in the name of god aſked what it was, and why it diſturbed them ſo. No anſwer was given to this, but the noiſe ceaſed for awhile, when the ſpirit came again, and as they all agreed, brought with it ſeven devils worſe than itſelf. One of the ſervants now lighted a large candle and ſet it in the door way between the two chambers to ſee what paſſed; and as he watched he plainly ſaw a hoof ſtriking a candleſtick into the middle of the room, and afterwards making three ſcrapes over the ſnuff of the candle to ſcrape it out: upon this the ſame peaſant was ſo bold as to draw a ſword, but he had ſcarce got it out when he perceived another inviſible hand had hold of it, and at length prevailing ſtruck him ſo violently on the head with the pummel that he fell down for dead with the blow. At this inſtant was heard another burſt like the diſcharge of a broadſide of a ſhip of war, and at about two minutes diſtance each, no leſs than nineteen more ſuch; theſe ſhook the houſe ſo violently that they expected every moment it would fall upon their heads. The neighbours on this were all alarmed and running to the houſe they all joined in prayers and pſalm ſinging, during which the noiſe ſtill continued in the other rooms, and the diſcharge of cannon without, though no one was there.

We

We ſhall conclude our relation of this event, by obſerving that though tricks have been often played in affairs of this kind, many of theſe things are not reconcileable to juggling; ſuch as 1ſt: The loud noiſes made beyond the power of man without ſuch inſtruments as were not there. 2nd. The tearing and breaking the beds. 3d. Throwing about the fire. 4th. The hoof treading out the candle. and, 5thly. The ſtriving for the ſword, and the blow the man received from the pummel of it.

To ſee however, how great men are ſometimes deceived; Dr. Plot, who records this relation, concludes—that he had from under the mans own hand that he, Joſeph Collins, commonly known by the name of funny Joe of Oxford, was himſelf this very devil; that he hired himſelf as a ſervant to theſe Commiſſioners, under the feigned name of Giles Sharp; and by the help of two friends, and an unknown trap door in the ceiling of the bed-chamber, and a lb. of white gun-powder, played all theſe amazing tricks by himſelf and his fellow ſervants, whom he had introduced on purpoſe to aſſiſt him.

The candles were contrived, by a common trick of gunpowder put in them, to put themſelves out at a certain time.

The

The dog who began the farce, was, (as he ſware) only a bitch who had the day before whelped in that room, and made all this diſturbance in ſeeking for her puppies: and which, when ſhe had ſerved his purpoſe he let out, and then looked for.—The ſtory of the hoof and ſword, himſelf alone was witneſs to, and was never ſuſpected of the truth of his aſſertions, tho' in reality mere fiction.—By the trap door his friends let down ſtones, faggots, glaſs, water, &c. which, they either left there or drew up again, as beſt ſuited with them; and by this way let themſelves in and out without opening the doors, or going thro' the key-holes *as their honours had wiſely determined.*—All the noiſes he declares he made, by placing quantities of white gun powder over pieces of burning charcoal on plates of tin; which, as they melted went off with that violent exploſion.

He tells us alſo, one thing beyond all the reſt, and was what in reality drove them from the houſe, though they never owned it. This was, they had formed a reſerve of part of the premiſes to themſelves, and hid their mutual agreement which they had drawn up in writing, under the earth in a pot, in a corner of the room where they uſually dined, in which an orange tree grew; when in the midſt of their dinner one day this earth of itſelf took fire, and burnt violently with a blue flame, filling the

room with a ſtrong ſulphureous ſtench; and this he alſo profeſſes was his own doing by a ſecret mixture he had placed there the day before.

We are happy in having an opportunity of ſetting hiſtory right about theſe remarkable events, and would not have our readers diſbelieve Collins's account of them from his naming white powder going off when melted, or his making the earth about the pot take fire of its own accord; ſince, however improbable theſe accounts may appear to ſome readers, and whatever ſecrets they might be in Joe's time, they are well known now in chemiſtry.

As to the laſt, there needs only to mix an equal quantity of iron filings finely powdered with ſome pure powdered ſulpher, and make them into a paſte with fair water; this paſte when it has lain together twenty ſix hours, will of itſelf take fire and burn all the ſulpher away with a blue flame and a great ſtink.

For the others, what he calls white gun-powder, is plainly the thundering powder called *pulvis fulminans* by our Chymiſts, it is made only of three parts of ſalt-petre, two parts of pearl-aſhes, or ſalt of tartar, and one part of flour of brimſtone, mixed together and beat to a fine powder, a ſmall quantity

tity of this held on the point of a knife over a candle, will not go off till it melts, and then give a report like a piſtol; and this he might eaſily diſpoſe in larger quantities, ſo as to make it go off itſelf when he was with his maſters.

THE END.

THE FEUDS

OF THE HOUSES OF

KINTAIR and SEATON.

A Scottiſh Hiſtory.

Giving a faithful account of a Family Quarrel which happened in the North, during the reign of MALCOM King of Scotland.

IN the North-weſt parts of Scotland, in the reign of Malcom, and nearly cotemporary with the uſurper Macbeth, whoſe hiſtory our immortal Shakſpere has made the ſubject of one of his Tragedies, there lived two young noblemen, at the head of two parties, the mortal enemies of one another: ſcarce a week paſſed at thoſe times when the families were near one-another without accounts of rapes, duels, and private murders—for the hatred was ſo univerſally ſtrong through the multi-

multitude, that from the lord to the meaneſt ſervant all thought it a merit and an honour to injure, even in the moſt diſhoneſt manner, any body that belonged even in any degree to the enemies party.

The names of the two young noblemen, at this time at the head of thoſe parties, were Seaton and Kintair; the former a youth of a moſt promiſing genius and great abilities, joined to great integrity, and an earneſt love of virtue; his heriditary hatred to the Kintairs was in ſhort, the only thing that could ſully his character; and that he governed in ſuch a manner, that had it not been for the temper of his enemy, the world ſaw the family quarrel might have been made up between them, and a deal of miſery and blood-ſhed prevented to the country: but ſuch was the implacable hatred and native cruelty of the young Kintair, that all offers of this kind in his lifetime muſt have been vain, and could only have expoſed the goodneſs of the offerer to the imputations of weakneſs, cowardice, and fear. The violent Kintair was in his temper bloody, revengeful, pityleſs, and ſavagely cruel, to a degree ſcarcely to be conceived; yet all theſe paſſions, and all his hatred to the Seaton family, could not prevent his falling in love at firſt ſight, with one of that houſe: indeed the ſiſter, tho he at firſt knew it not, of the very lord he hated ſo implacably.

This lady whoſe name was Margaret, had not only a very charming perſon; but the innate virtues of her ſoul diſplayed themſelves outwardly in her face and whole deportment, and gave her an air and manner not to be reſiſted; ſhe and a twin ſiſter ſo like her in every lineament of face, that they were not eaſily to be known aſunder, were the only relations of the young Seaton; and with him made all the remainder of that noble and ancient family.

Opportunities of meeting, it is eaſy to imagine were not very frequent between theſe two families, eſpecially between the heads of them: in ſhort it happened that the rough Kintair had never ſeen this lady, till one evening as ſhe was returning on horſeback from a viſit to a friend at ſome miles diſtance, met her as he was going acroſs the country, attended by half a dozen ſervants to a party of diverſion. The moment he beheld her, he ſtopped his horſe, ordered as polite a meſſage as he could dictate to be delivered to her, and begged he might have leave to ſpeak to her: the lady alighted from her horſe, and readily admitted him: when he approached her, he threw himſelf upon his knees, entreated her to tell him her condition; and if the laws of honour would permit, he would make her wife to the firſt nobleman of the country; for that he was the lord Kintair. The lady who had till

that

that word heard him with a downcaſt look, and a face covered with a bluſh of modeſty, now immediately leaping on her horſe again, tod him; young lord, a word will anſwer you: my name is Margeret Seaton. And with theſe words in her mouth, left him and went on her journey.

Words are too faint to deſcribe the conflict of raging paſſions in the breaſt of the wild Kintair on this occaſion; love, anger, pride, revenge, the loſt hopes of enjoyment of the lady, and the diſdain of a refuſal, all combatting together in his breaſt, left him no room at firſt for words, or for a reſolution: he threw himſelf on the ground, and tore up the very earth in agony; at length ariſing in a fury, he bade his ſervants follow and bring her, and her attendants back to him: they were not got far however, before he changed his opinion, and thinking on the uncertainty of their ſucceſs, as the lady's attendants were equal to them in number, and determining to truſt his revenge to nobody but himſelf, mounted his horſe and followed them.

Love and revenge gave him wings as it were, he ſoon overtook his own ſervants, and quickly after the lady Margaret and hers; here he rode up to her, and addreſſed himſelf to her a ſecond time in theſe words: Inſolent idiot, did you imagine you could eſcape me thus, and that I would let you go home

home, to make your brother ſport with my entreaties, and your proud refuſal? No! think not I would marry the ſiſter of a man that I hate, or be the ſcandalous means, by a boyiſh paſſion, of making up an enmity, which has ſo juſt a cauſe as that between our families; and which I hope will be eternal. There is a ſhorter way for me to ſatiate my deſires with you; and one that gives me too a double pleaſure, that feeds at once my hatred and my love, and gives me the nobleſt revenge on all your houſe that my hate can even wiſh. With theſe words he gave the ſignal of murder to his attendants; who deſtroyed all the unhappy lady's ſervants after a ſhort conflict; during which, the inhuman lord raviſhed their miſerable miſtreſs. Within a moment after this, tho' too late alas to prevent it, a party of near a hundred of the Seatons appeared upon a neighbouring hill, they however ſaw nothing of this; but the ſavage raviſher fearing to be overpowered by numbers, mounted his horſe and with his attendants rode off in haſte through the woods. The Seatons paſſed another way, and the wretched lady was in a moment left alone, encompaſſed with the horrors of her own fate, the carcaſſes of her murdered ſervants, and the bloody weapons of the murderers; which, in their haſte to get away on ſight of the other party, had made them leave behind them. Her firſt reſolution

ſolution was to end her life and miſery together, by plunging one of the daggers in her own boſom; but religion forbidding that, and her own ſhame preventing her returning home, ſhe came to a final reſolution of hiding herſelf from the world for ever; and picking up the weapons to lay before her as an eternal remembrance of the horrid ſcene, made her way to a diſtant cottage, where ſhe told her ſtory; and giving to the poor honeſt hinds her money, jewels, and whatever elſe of value ſhe had about her, ſwore them to an eternal ſecrecy, and conjured them to let her ſpend the remainder of a miſerable life with them.

The bloody Kintair as ſoon as he had got to a a place of ſafety, ſat down with his attendants. exulted with them in the ſucceſs of his monſtrous villainy, and ſwore he never taſted the pleaſures of revenge before, he praiſed their courage, gave them a number of preſents, and promiſed them a thouſand more, and finally bound himſelf in an aſſociation with them, to make them his companions, and his friends for ever; and give them all eſtates, provided they joined heartily with him in proſecuting a ſcene of vengeance, which he told them he had now concerted, and of which, this was but the auſpicious beginning. All were proud of the honour their lord did them; and all, with the ſevereſt imprecations, entered into the aſſociation

he

he promoted, of never reſting till the whole family of the Seatons, which, as I have before obſerved, conſiſted now of three perſons only, ſhould be extinct.

Friends and brothers in revenge ſaid Kintair on this, hear me now, and know the firſt ſtep to my deſign is this: the lady whom I have enjoyed muſt periſh; this muſt be the firſt done, and you ſhall then ſee and be ſurprized at my concerted vengeance; I had not ſpared her then, but for the party we ſaw above us, but now the deſperate attempt muſt be to ſeize her again e'er ſhe get home, and kill her on the ſpot where I enjoyed her: this compleats my yet unfiniſhed vengeance on her, and leads on beſide to a ſcene of complicated miſchief with which my brain is full, which you can of yet have no idea of. The words were no ſooner uttered, but all were up, and ready for the enterpriſe; and made that haſte that they ſoon got forwarder than ſhe could poſſibly have been by that time had ſhe continued her journey homewards; here they pitched in a thick wood, thro' which the road to the caſtle of the Seatons lay, and waited for the unfortunate lady. She, poor creature, was otherwiſe employed than they imagined; but her ſiſter, the lady Jane unfortunately for her, had the ſame day been abroad to ſome little diſtance, and returning home in the duſk of the evening alone, the

the villains immediately ſeized on her, and according to the orders of their lord, carried her to the fatal place where the rape and murder had been before committed. It was late in the night before they arrived there, and the moon ſhining bright, the diſtracted lady Margaret had left her cottage, and wandered to weep her ſorrows at the fatal place where the horrid act had been committed; ſhe was here toſſing herſelf on the ground, and making the rocks and woods reſound with her diſtracted cries, when the murderers approached with their unhappy prey; the trampling of horſes, the oaths and blaſphemies of the company, and the known voice of the hated Kintair terrified the lady Margaret ſo, that ſhe crept among the buſhes and thorns that wounded her tender ſkin as ſhe paſſed on at every ſtep, till ſhe came to a thicket, behind which ſhe reſted to liſten to the noiſe of theſe abandoned ruffians. They were now come to the place, and the ſervants throwing down the unfortunate and miſtaken victim of their fury, whoſe mouth they had before ſtopped and tied over with handkercheifs to prevent her outcries, no voice was heard but of the ſavage Kintair; who walking up to her, cried in an inſulting tone: we were prevented lady this morning, but here is now a favour that you ſhall own ſtrikes you to the heart; with theſe words he plunged his ſword into her boſom, and ended her

life

life, without diſcovering his miſtake. As ſoon as the unfortunate lady fell, the inhuman murderer ſeating himſelf on her body yet ſtruggling in the agonies of death, ſaid to his attendants, now friends hear the utmoſt of my intentions; alarm you the neighbouring villages with cries of murder; thoſe other bodies are yet warm, and they ſhall be made to believe all fell together. I'll join in the croud that firſt comes, and do you Farquarſon (ſpeaking to one of his ſervants) mount the ſwifteſt horſe, and as you ſee us approach, ride with your utmoſt ſpeed towards Seaton caſtle then round the heath and join us, and you ſhall be rejoiced at what my revenge ſhall make of this. Immediately all ſeperated to the work, and the afflicted Lady Margaret took that opportunity to get back to her cottage: ſhe was ſcarce there when the whole country was raiſed; the bloody Kintair joined the mob, and Farquarſon when they came in ſight, fled as he was ordered before them; Kintair purſued him with a number of the clowns; and when he was got from them, that monſter of villany returned, and aſſured and perſuaded his followers that it was Lord Seaton who fled before them. The clowns willing to ſhew their diſcernment, agreed to a man that they knew him all the way he went, and knew the horſe he rode on; and on now viewing the bodies of the murdered perſons, The abandoned Kintair perſuaded

ſuaded every body, that this Seaton had debauched his ſiſter and brought her hither, where, with the aſſiſtance of his other ſervants, he had murdered her and all that were there preſent. His own people it is eaſy to imagine joined readily to this, and the reſt were ſoon brought over to follow their opinion: and as ſoon as Kintair found this, he made them a long declamation on the horror of the crime and perſuaded them all to follow him immediately to the next large town, and relate before the magiſtracy what they had ſeen. His perſuaſions and the rewards he promiſed to all who would go with him, made every one preſent follow, and immediately they ſet forward, tho' in the night, and never ſtopped nor ſtayed till they arrived at the end of their journey. All the way as they went on, the villainous Kintair's attendants extolled the generoſity, the goodneſs, and love of juſtice their maſter ſhewed in this, and partly by theſe praiſes, and partly by promiſed rewards to all that ſhould be able to give material evidences againſt the murderers, the clowns were led into forming a thouſand circumſtances, all poſitive againſt the pretended murderer. When they arrived at the town, it happened that the Magiſtracy was at that time ſitting: they were all rejoiced at this, and went in a body to the hall, and demanding (on account of the horrid enormity of the crime they came to give evidence on, an imme-

diate audience) were admitted. The arch devil Kintair entering at their head, recounted to the Magiſtracy the ſtory that he had before concerted, and ſwore to the identity of the perſon he accuſed; his ſervants all followed his example, and unwilling not to ſay ſomething from their own knowledge, each ſingled out ſome one by name of the innocent Seaton's ſervants, whom he accuſed of the murder of the attendants; and the clowns joining their poſitive oaths to the ſame facts, and many other forged circumſtances, the abſent Seaton and ſix of his attendants were accuſed of a moſt horrid murder, on the poſitive oaths of more than thirty perſons, who all declared themſelves to have been eye witneſſes of the facts they alledged againſt them.

The innocent Lord Seaton knew nothing of any part of this fatal tragedy, but was returning to his caſtle and ſome of his ſervants, from a ſhort journey he had taken to meet his ſiſters, when he was ſeized by the officers of juſtice ſent to apprehend him; all circumſtances are conſtrued into meaning by people poſſeſſed of an opinion; and accordingly this unhappy lord's being now found returning, with a number of his ſervants from that part of the country where the murder had been committed, was looked on as a proof of his having been committing it; and the agonies, grief, aſtoniſhment, and horror with which he received the news of the death

death of his beloved ſiſter and his ſervants, were conſtrued into confeſſions of his guilt.

The miſtake of the two ſiſters was never found out, and the poſitive oaths of the accuſers, that it was Lady Margaret that was murdered, made it not at all doubted. That unfortunate Lady was glad of the miſtake, wiſhing ſince the rape for nothing but to be unknown to the whole world, and looking on this as the moſt ſecure of all the means of being ſo would never, had ſhe not afterwards felt the then neceſſity that compelled her to it, have declared herſelf to the world.

A ſhort journey brought the accuſed Lord before the Magiſtracy; he entered the room before they expected him, and immediately on his appearance all the accuſers renewed their oaths, that he and his attendants who were now with him, were the very perſons who had committed the murders, and the vile Kinnair made a long harangue to the court, aggravating in the ſtrongeſt manner the horror of the crime, and adding a thouſand reproaches. When he had done, the accuſed Lord advanced towards his judges with a ſettled countenance, and looking with diſdain on his accuſer, and on his judges with that modeſt but intrepid confidence that conſcious innocence ever gives, ſpoke in the following manner:—

My LORDS and JUDGES,

View with an impartial eye the conduct of my paſt life, and you will determine, I cannot but be innocent of the horrid crimes I am accuſed of, and that I am ſo, be it ſufficient that I now once, in the moſt ſolemn manner affirm before you.

Conſider my accuſer is the profeſſed enemy of my houſe and family, and that theſe who are accuſed as my accomplices, are the very friends, the fathers, and the brothers of my murdered honeſt ſervants.

Is it probable that they could for my ſake be induced to murder theſe, or that I, who have been known to love my ſiſter Margaret with a more than a common affection could be her murderer? Impoſſible! think on theſe circumſtances, and weigh them well ere you determine any thing, be not raſh or haſty. You know not what hereafter may appear, that yet is not ſuſpected.

Here the accuſed ended his defence, which was ſoon overpowered by the number and repeated oaths of the evidences, and particularly of his enemy Kintair; who aſſerted that he ſaw him plunge his dagger in the breaſt of the Lady Margaret, and ſaw the others butchering his attendants. The ſupreme judge was now riſing from his ſeat, to pronounce ſentence on the accuſed lord and his attendants,

dants, when a voice was heard crying with the utmoſt earneſtneſs:—F bear, forbear, O Judge; guard well the doors that none escape. and at the ſame inſtant a woman threw herself at the feet of the judges, crying out, I am that Margaret whom this innocent, this beſt of brothers is accuſed of murdering; and look, whoſe are theſe?—With theſe words ſhe threw down the daggers. The court all roſe in a moment, aſtoniſhed at her appearance; her brother threw himſelf on her neck in a tranſport of joy, and the court examining the daggers and finding on each the name of its owner, demanded of the lady the true hiſtory of the fact. She on this related the whole cataſtrophe in the moſt pathetic manner. And when ſhe had heard the ſentence intended for her brother and his ſervants, paſſed on his accuſers, retired into a nunnery, and left the innocent, but unhappy Seaton in the poſſeſſion of his own, and the forfeited eſtates and titles of his accuſers—which his deſcendants, the Seatons of that country enjoy to this day.

THE

STORY OF JANE GILBERT,

A SUPPOSED WITCH,

BY MR. CHRISTOPHER SMART.

THERE was in the weſt of England, where I lived ſeveral years, a poor induſtrious woman, who laboured under the evil report of being an old witch. Every hog that died with the murrain, every cow that ſlipt her calf, ſhe was accountable for. If a horſe had the ſtaggers, ſhe was ſuppoſed to be in his head, and whenever the wind blew a little harder than ordinary, Goody Gilbert was ſaid to be playing her tricks, and riding on a broomſtick in the air.

Theſe and a thouſand other phantaſies, too ridiculous to recite, poſſeſſed the pates of the common people. Horſe-ſhoes were nailed with the heels upwards, and many tricks were made uſe of, to entrap and mortify the poor creature. Such, indeed, was their rage againſt her, that they even petitioned Mr. Williams, the parſon of the pariſh, not

to

to let her come to church; and, at laſt, even inſiſted upon it. This, however, he overruled, and allowed the poor old woman a nook in one of the aiſles to herſelf, where ſhe muttered over her prayers in the beſt manner ſhe could.

The pariſh, thus diſconcerted and enraged, withdrew the ſmall pittance they allowed for her ſupport; and would have reduced her to the neceſſity of ſtarving, had ſhe not been ſtill aſſiſted by the benevolent Mr. Williams. He often ſent her bread and meat; frequently procured her ſpinning-work from the next market-town; and was ſo provoked at their behaviour to the poor old creature, that he once applied to a neighbouring juſtice of the peace in her behalf; but, as there happened a ſtorm the night before, which ſtripped part of the thatch off his worſhip's ſtable, that wiſe haberdaſher of the law refuſed her relief.

I was one afternoon drinking tea with Mr. and Mrs. Williams, when a meſſage being brought that poor Jane Gilbert was extremely ill, we all three went to ſee her. As ſhe was ſick, I expected to have found her in bed; and we opened the door ſoftly, not to diſturb her; but, when we came into her little hovel, poor Jane was ſpinning by a ſmall peat fire, which I could have covered with my hand.

As the poor old ſoul was deaf, ſhe did not hear

us

us open the door, and I had an opportunity of taking a full ſurvey of her before ſhe perceived us. A picture of ſuch wretchedneſs I never ſaw before or ſince. Her body was half naked, inſomuch that her withered ſhoulders and part of her breaſts appeared through her tattered gown. Her head was bound round with an old blue ſtocking, that expoſed her bald crown and her ears to view. Her hoſe were compoſed of two haybands, tied round her legs with packthread. She ſat in an old elbow-chair; and, by fits, dozed, and then again turned her wheel, to the motion of which her under-jaw kept exact time.

When Mr. Williams called to her, ſhe raiſed herſelf up: and, by the ſupport of the chair, made us a curtſey.

The manner of our coming in had a little confuſed her, but she ſoon recovered herſelf, and, by our deſire, ſat down. Mr. Williams then enquired into the ſtate of her diſorder; and ſhe told him, that ſhe believed her illneſs was occaſioned by her eating that food, pointing to an earthern pan that ſtood before us, in which were mixed a little barley meal, ſalt, and water; and adding, that ſhe had not had any bread or meat for ſeven days. At this he was ſurpriſed, and aſked what was become of the victuals he ſent her the beginning of that week? She thanked him for it; and replied, that two fellows in the neighbourhood, whoſe names

ſhe

ſhe mentioned, had taken it from her, and that one of them had ſtruck her ſeveral blows. Mr. Williams ſeemed angry that ſhe did not inform him of it: but ſhe deſired he would not be diſpleaſed; and ſaid, ſhe was loth to be too troubleſome.

Mrs. Williams, who is a mighty good woman, was greatly affected with this circumſtance, and ſhed tears; which were, indeed, accompanied with my own. She then warmed a little ſack-whey ſhe had brought in her pocket, and gave it the poor creature to drink. This Jane ſwallowed eagerly, and was ſo chearful after it, that ſhe talked to us above two hours, entertained us with her whole ſtory, and the hiſtory of her time, which was frequently interrupted with the warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

When I expreſſed my ſurprize at her memory and good ſenſe, ſhe told me that ſhe was once a young gentlewoman's waiting-maid, with whom ſhe had a good education; and could, even now, read and write very well, but that the neighbours would not ſuffer her to have a pen and ink, and had ſtolen her bible and ſpectacles.

Juſt as we were coming away, I put two half-crowns in her hand, which ſhe returned me again, and begged I would oblige her with ſome halfpence in their ſtead—"for the people," ſays ſhe, "in the neighbourhood, are poſſeſſed with a notion, that I can

I can turn lead into ſilver and gold; but that, by and by it will become lead again; and therefore none of the ſhops will change my money."

When we parted with the old woman, ſhe cried; and whiſpered to Mr. Williams to come again, and give her the ſacrament, for that ſhe did not think ſhe ſhould live long.

I could recite many other circumſtances in Jane, or (as they by way of reproach called her) Joan Gilbert's behaviour, which I think proved that ſhe was not a witch, but a pious and good Chriſtian, unleſs witchcraft can be ſuppoſed to conſiſt of true wiſdom, morality and religion. But I now haſten to the ſequel of my ſtory, in which you will find that the ſource from whence witchcraft is reputed to ſpring, is poverty, age, and ignorance; and that it is impoſſible for a woman to paſs for a witch, unleſs ſhe is very poor, aged, and lives in a neighbourhood where the people are void of common ſenſe.

Some time after we had this interview with Jane Gilbert, a brother of her's died in London; who though like a truly adopted ſon of Care, he would not part with a farthing while he lived, at his death was obliged to leave her five thouſand pounds; money that he could not carry in the coffin with him. This altered the face of Jane's affairs prodigiouſly: ſhe was no longer Jane, alias Joan Gilbert, the ugly old witch, but Madam Gilbert, her old

old ragged garb was exchanged for one that was new and genteel; her greateſt enemies made their court to her; even the juſtice himſelf came to wiſh her joy; and, though ſeveral hogs and horſes died, and the wind frequently blew after that, Madam Gilbert was never ſuppoſed to have any hand in it; and from hence it is plain, as I obſerved before, that a woman muſt be very poor, very old, and live in a neighbourhood where the people are very ſtupid, before ſhe can poſſibly paſs for a witch.

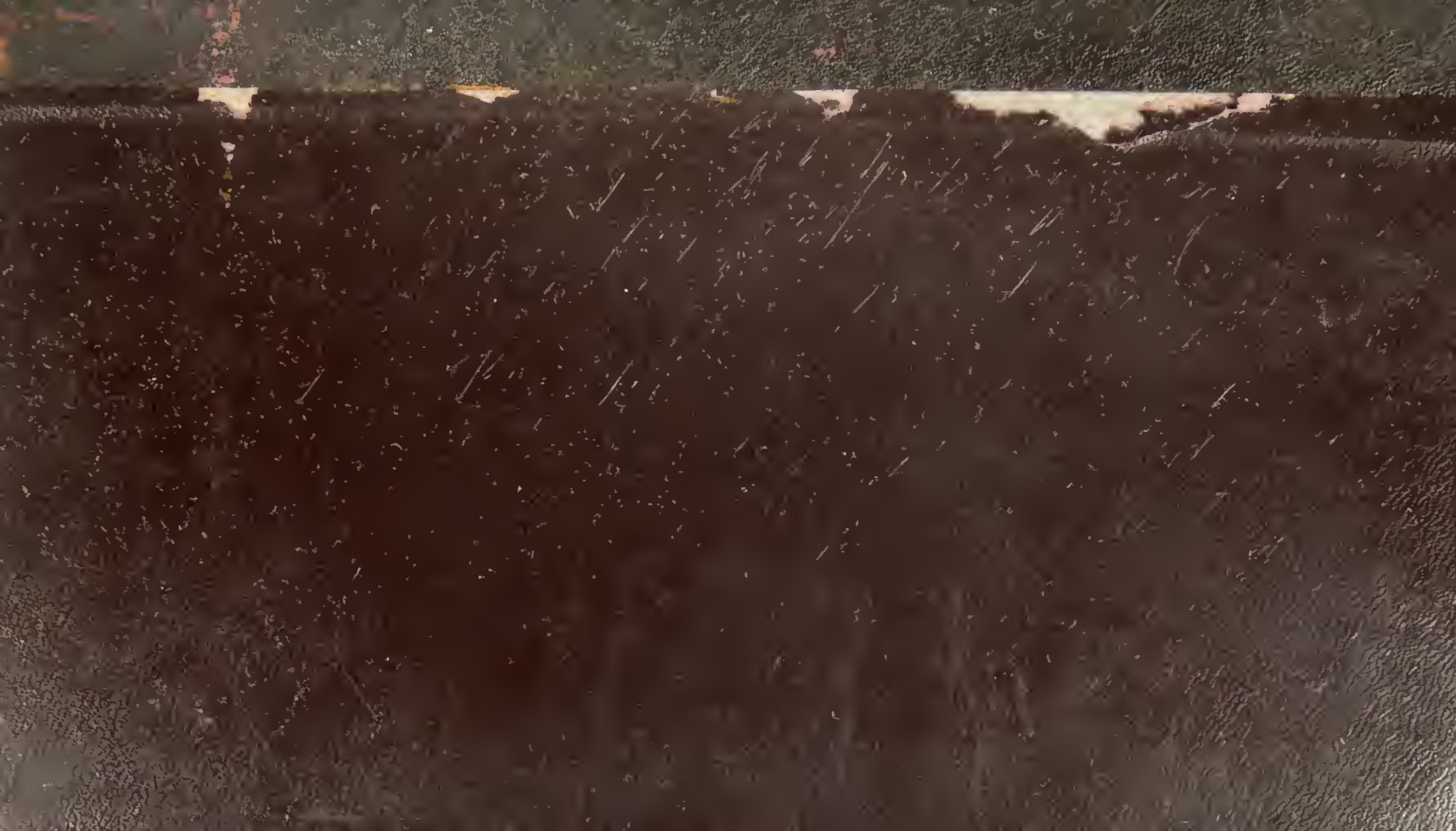
It was a ſaying of Mr. Williams, who would ſometimes be jocoſe, and had the art of making even ſatire agreeable, that if ever Jane deſerved the character of a witch, it was after this money was left her; for that, with her five thouſand pounds, ſhe did more acts of charity and friendly offices than all the people of fortune within fifty miles of the place. Many thouſands of my readers know this to be true; but as ſome may be ignorant of it, I muſt inform them, that ſhe gave bibles and common-prayer books to all the people in the neighbourhood, and ſhe paid for the ſchooling of forty boys and girls. She boiled a large copper twice a week, and made broth and dumplings for all her neighbours who were old or ſick; ſhe lent five hundred pounds, in ſmall ſums, to poor tradeſmen and farmers, without intereſt, for ever; and appointed truſtees to take the beſt ſecurity they could, ſo that the principal might not be loſt; and

to

to remove the ſums occaſionally from one family to another, when the one could ſpare it, and the other wanted aſſiſtance. She ſettled twenty-five pounds per annum on the miniſter of the pariſh, to viſit and pray by them, and teach the children their catechiſm; and to each child that came to church to repeat the catechiſm, ſhe ordered a plumb-cake every Sunday.

Among her donations, ſhe did not forget her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, but gave their ſon and daughter five hundred pounds a-piece in her life-time. As to her own part, ſhe allowed herſelf but eighteen pounds a year to live on; and that, at her death, ſhe bequeathed to an old woman who attended her.

And this is a woman they were about to deſtroy for witchcraft and ſorcery! But the people are now aſhamed of their behaviour, and therefore I have concealed the name of the place.

THE END.

[*Printed by J. Roach, Ruſſell-Court, Sept.* 22, 1802.]